



# *News Release*

## **Rhode Island District Office**

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### **Small Business Administration Names William Sanchez** **2003 Rhode Island Minority Small Business Person** *Awards to be presented during Minority Enterprise Development Week*

**Providence, RI** – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced today that William Sanchez, President of William's Financial Services, Inc. in Central Falls, has been named the 2003 Rhode Island Minority Small Business Person of the Year. Sanchez and six other small business owners and advocates will be honored during the Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Awards Dinner on Tuesday, December 2 at Rhodes on-the-Pawtuxet in Cranston. Melanie R. Sabelhaus, SBA Deputy Administrator, will deliver the keynote address.

MED Week is cosponsored by the Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce of Rhode Island.

William's Financial Services provides accounting, payroll, insurance and other financial services to clients in Rhode Island, Massachusetts and New York. Sanchez, a native of Colombia, came to the United States with his family in 1990 and two years later started his business by providing accounting and income tax return preparation services. Today, the company has six full-time and two part-time employees and has grown with the proceeds of an SBA-backed loan to purchase real estate and expand facilities.

Prior to coming to the United States, Sanchez enjoyed a career in accounting and business administration for Banco del Estado, and Celanese Colombiana in his native Colombia and International Data Systems in Venezuela.

Sanchez was named the Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce Small Business Leader of the Year in 2002, and received the Colombian American Cultural Society's Community Leader Award in 2001.

An SBA Special Achievement Award will be presented to Judith Cardigan-Parisi, Vice President and Relationship Manager at Citizens Bank, for her long-standing commitment to assisting the minority-owned and women-owned small business community.

**(More)**

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The SBA Community Commitment Award will be presented to Jaime Aguayo, President and CEO of Cumbre Communications, Inc. Aguayo, formerly an Economic Development Specialist in the Rhode Island District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration, devoted nearly 25 years to serving the minority community through counseling and training. Earlier this year Aguayo formed Cumbre Communications. The company operates WALE, Super Max 990 AM, a 50,000 watt AM radio station in Providence that broadcasts Spanish-language programming.

Awards will also be presented by the Hispanic American Chamber of Commerce, the State of Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation, and the Ocean State Business Forum.

Rhode Island Minority Enterprise Development Week will be celebrated December 1-5 and also features two free workshops, a Matchmaking Conference for federal procurement opportunities.

On Monday December 1, the SBA will offer a free workshop on the Small Disadvantage Business (SDB) and 8(a) Certification Programs. The workshop will be held at the SBA Rhode Island District Office, 380 Westminster Street, Room 511, in Providence, from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. The SDB and 8(a) certifications offers assistance for socially and economically disadvantaged firms and also provide benefits in federal contracting. To register for this workshop call the SBA at (401) 528-4561, or online at [www.sba.gov/ri/ridoregistration.html](http://www.sba.gov/ri/ridoregistration.html).

The Matchmaking Conference will be held at Rhodes on-the-Pawtuxet in Cranston on December 2 from 10 am to 3 pm. The registration fee is \$20 and includes lunch. Deputy Administrator Sabelhaus will be the luncheon speaker. The conference will match small business owners seeking to do business with federal, state, and local governments and prime federal contractors. To register for the Matchmaking Conference, contact Gina Johnson at the RI Economic Development Corporation, Procurement Technical Assistance Center at (401) 222-2601, extension 148.

A free workshop, Powering-Up Your Internet Presence, will be held on Wednesday, December 3 from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. at the Verizon Bryant College Telecommunications Center at Bryant College. The workshop will outline the best practices for planning, upgrading, and maintaining a Web site. Register for this workshop online at [www.sba.gov/ri/ridoregistration.html](http://www.sba.gov/ri/ridoregistration.html), or by calling (401) 528-4561.